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ELECTION SPECIAL

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ELECTION SPECIAL 2006

THE UNTOLD STORY: INSIDE AN EPIC BATTLE

SECRET STRATEGIES, BACKROOM BLUNDERS & PRIVATE CRISES



PAUL WELLS

Secrets you have to wonder how we always manage to get into these crises.

Other countries make decisions. We make ever forward

flexibly determined Quebec referendum, 1995; a drug Martin-Chretien feud, 2002; Jean Chretien's words up spending a

year and a half in limbo between power and powerlessness. Federal election, 2004. Paul Martin winds up chastened, but not out. Federal election, 2006. Stephen Harper is in, but chastened.

There are places in the world that get to one hope all by itself, or disappointment all by itself, or big messy chaotic but glorious well wish here. In Canada, we've developed the trade of earning hope and disappointment together into absurdly complex conditions

that threaten to fall apart if you touch them. You can't even get a decent emotional meal around here anymore.

And yet for a moment on Monday night it was possible to ignore the Gordian knot into which Canadian politics has tied itself yet again and witness something fresh and new. A new prime minister who got the job by hard work in the face of long odds. A proud city, Calgary, spread throughout the campaign but now home to a winner.

Stephen Harper won 114 to 110, and then a grateful labour cheer for him. But for a moment he allowed himself a momentary victory in words that showed him capable, if only just this once, of something approaching poetry.

"Our Canada is rooted in our shared history, and in the values which have and will endure," he said in words designed to soothe his supporters and soothe his detractors. "Throughout this campaign, I have been inspired by the thousands of Canadians I met who embody these values."

"Individuals, families, workers, and business people trying to get ahead. Parents doing their best to teach their kids right from wrong. Immigrants discovering new opportunities in a new land. Seniors seeking security. The young pioneering their dreams East and West, English and French, city and country, men and women, new Canadians and old."

He reminded everyone of his platform—he will need to remind everyone many times, because in a minority Parliament it will be so easy to lose his way. Then some more words from a man who so often struggles to show any, and more often doesn't bother to try.

"Finally, I have never been so proud of our great country, and I am honoured and overwhelmed to be asked to lead it," he said. "We will do all we can. We will give it all we've got. From time to time, we will make mistakes."

Which is more or less how Stephen Harper began his. The 2006 campaign was the most surprising and most exciting in many years. It came down to the story of two men: Paul Martin, who wanted the highest political job in the country for so long and fought for it so ferociously, only to lose his way when he finally reached the promised land. And Stephen Harper, who always seemed clever enough but in whom very few people ever saw the spark of leadership. But he did all he could, he gave it all he had, and through the eyes made manifest on the home screen, he toppled a man who had once seemed a saint of Canadian politics.

Then there was the postlight weeks, the jagged of the McCain's team covering the election campaign—the longest in 21 years—traveling with the leaders and monitoring the war rooms along with reporter Jim Ryan. McCain's reporter, Eric Brown, wrote about the cover-up of the McCain's team's detailed charade of this election week-end anywhere. When it began, how give Harper any chance

at all. Certainly not the people around Paul Martin, who smiled, quietly, the despite almost two years of disappointing government plagued by bad memories of Clinton-era scandals, they thought Martin would hold power and even get back the Liberals' majority in the House of Commons.

But what the Liberals didn't know was that when it began, it was already almost over.

Stephen Harper had been in power and then, like most unexpected by now, the way some career politicians are. The Conservative leader had been an easy target for voters because he wasn't a politician for weeks on end. The big news of election 2006 is that it was the first of work that began during one of Harper's vaunting spells. It began some days after the 2004 election.

Paul Martin lost again in this election and decided he had won, that his victory was due to good work by his staff, and that his further labour was required. Stephen Harper joined seats and decided he had lost, that Martin's victory was his fault, and that massive overhauls to personal and approach were the only solutions. So, after a couple of things, campaign 2006 is a lesson in the virtues of humility.

There were other players in this campaign. Jack Layton found a threat he could not coming from either side, but one he was not so sure he could dodge: the certain knowledge that when the going got tough, Paul Martin would come shopping for NDP voters he could have to die. Liberals. Gilles Duceppe had grown, against all odds, from laughter and laughter to the Quebecois leader in 1997 to older statesman, the longest-serving of the party leaders with the one whom Quebec's political class had selected to win big and, if he succeeded in doing so, to start the march toward a third sovereignty referendum.

The four men and their armies kept campaigning one another as they prosecuted their four very different campaigns. Part of the value, we hope, in retelling this campaign camp by camp will be to avoid the pitfall of 2002 hindsight and remind ourselves how little of it anyone could have foreseen. There was supposed to be a boring, unnecessary election that changed nothing. And if it wasn't that, it was supposed to be a campaign of unprecedented bitterness and viciousity. The campaign of 2006 proved once again, not for the first time or the last, that the conventional wisdom in Ottawa is almost always the wrong word to stretch. Harper with wife Laureen, Ashley, and children Finn and Rachel.

WE SAW HARPER SAVOUR VICTORY IN WORDS APPROACHING POETRY. AND WE SAW EMOTION FROM A MAN WHO STRUGGLES TO SHOW ANY, AND MORE OFTEN DOESN'T BOTHER TO TRY.

non campaign began very quickly after the last campaign," Norquay said. "He started over the summer, a very thorough, broad, honest, no holds-barred evaluation of what worked and what didn't."

Michael Porter, the Conservatives' on-ethics man, hasn't about the new strategy but was part of the initial team that actually took part, but insists a liberal and corporate lawyer had a fairly minor role for the post-mortem exercise over the summer of 2004. He called them "the best-up meetings." Four Conservatives, only one of whom with any public profile at all, were chosen by Harper for the process.

Tom Haragan provided what guests for tea during the Harper brain trust, and he is very rarely a black hole at charisma. The University of Calgary political scientist had been, with Harper, one of the earliest and brightest policy thinkers in Pearson Manning's Reform party. In 1997, Haragan wrote *Winning for the West*, a respectful but unimpressed analysis of Manning's Reform leadership. In 2001, he led Harper's campaign for the Alliance leadership. Since then, he has been extremely reluctant to say anything on any political, or on off the record.

Doug Parker, a calm tempered, smooth negotiator with a head and an admirable chain-smoking habit, was a senior reporter on the 2004 campaign. He said, Dineau was one of the 24 Conservative candidates elected in the party's Ontario bid although that year. If Fleming's expertise was in political theory, Bailey's was in field work and organizational local strengths and weaknesses, but

servants reader said, to become "Harper's consigliere, the voice of the leader with no private role."

The last key player was the least known. Patrick Martz had worked at Nanogas, a Toronto public relations firm whose two lead figures are among the most flamboyant in Canadian politics. Warren Kinsella is the apostate Liberal novelist, blogger, columnist or often chronicler, vice-president of Paul Marling. Jimmy Watt is the dagger Conservative orange master behind Mike Harris's 1995 and 1999 Ontario election victories. Kinsella and Watt are two of the best known and most opinionated Canadian politicians. But Patrick Martz? There aren't three reporters in Ontario who could pick him out of a police lineup (He politely but flatly refused to be interviewed for this article.) But what a reputation. "An absolute genius," one Tory war room staffer said.

"He's a bit of a nerd," noted another. "He has no hobbies. Politics is his hobby. He likes to study winning election campaigns like chess in the English speaking countries." Martz worked in the Tory war room in 2002 and, after it went sour in the last week, "went home and wrote the majority of all post-mortem meetings," this source said. Martz's name was brutal and specific. Reading it, other leaders might have concluded Martz was looking down while they were down. Harper decided his lack of plain-talk made Martz available.

"He works things out through debate," Norquay said of Harper. "It's his people find that intimidating because he doesn't present his views dogmatically. He tells you what he thinks, and sometimes he tells you it's the

same Non-morbidly-fine-scientist got noticed. Another obvious gaffe was Harper's decision to raise on the road, two weeks before the 2005 election, about forming a majority government. The collapse of Tory support followed in its after. In fact, Norquay says now, Harper's speculation wasn't exactly the sound of his ego getting too big for his boots. It was an attempt to build an "Ontario Quebec echo," the media phenomenon whereby any support in Ontario makes a party more credible in Quebec, which makes it more popular in Ontario, and so forth. "It was thought out," Norquay said. "It was an attempt to say, 'Quebec, it's happening in Ontario.' We have two seats now, we're gonna come up with 200 Hebeaux." But it didn't take. So it wouldn't be repeated.

So much for the easy mistakes, really fixed. The best up wasn't other challenges were bigger. Harper's 2004 promises, they decided, were too grand and lofty. "They had no sense because they were at stake first," Norquay said. "It's one thing to talk about, 'We will cut your taxes.' It's another thing to talk about a tax credit on retirement passes. Or 10 bucks a year to help you pay for your kid's hockey equipment or the house."

Martz identified four campaigns over the past half century where conservative parties, once viewed as the tool of fat cats to line their pockets, had to find a way to capture the middle class and, through it, power. Richard Nixon's 1968 election was the first. Margaret Thatcher's 1979 landslide in Britain was next. Then there was the 1994 break through of Newt Gingrich and the United States Republicans, who broke the Demo-



Big wheels keep on turning

cratic pockets of talent, problem candidates. But Brende is a steady barrel and a stable directed young political scientist who also came from the University of Calgary and had passed, briefly, to teach at the University of Western Ontario before becoming the Conservatives' executive director and then Harper's chief of staff. So he knew party strategy, election rules, the arcane without anyone within what parties stage their confrontations. Brende is a nervous but immediately likable man whose ability to smooth difficult situations made him a rarity in the Conservative hierarchy. He was braced out, a Con-

servative. But people willing to confront Harper can reach a modus vivendi with him. Martz became one of them.

Through July and August of 2006, the post-mortem sessions held best-up meetings and listed memos. (Norquay joined only at the group grew, late in August.) Some of the best up memos' decisions were easy enough. The Conservatives had elected their entire platform on a Sunday. No national newspaper publishes on Sunday. No network newscast delays its start anchor on a Sunday night. A Saturday platform drop guaranteed that no body would hear about the Conservative plat-

form struggle hold on Congress with a 40-point plus called the Corner With America. The last election was the one last known in Canadian voters and, perhaps, most useful as a model for the Conservatives: the 1996 victory of America's conservative-leaning coalition under John McCain, over Paul Brown's Liberal party.

Canada and Australia are huge former British colonies with small populations, a steady influx of immigrants, and troubled Aboriginal communities. At times the two countries can spare the false-blue-eyes images of each other. Martz would have found



LEFT: IN 2007, JOHN CARMAICHAEL, A FORMER LIBERAL MP, WAS NAMED TO LEAD THE CONSERVATIVE CAMPAIGN. RIGHT: THE CONSERVATIVE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS IN OTTAWA.



and all of us should hope that it doesn't have a long-term impact on their leadership." There was more. "What if one of your best friends...demonstrated respect that offended like the rest of us?" he asked. "What if that began to sow the seeds of doubt in your mind about the strength of that friendship?"

What happened over the next few days could only happen in Canada: Liberal support, which had been sagging, sank a bounce. Martin had once suggested for the Liberal leadership on a premise of a "more sophisticated" relationship with the U.S. Now he was repositioned as a comic book hero. He showed up at a B.C. lumberyard, wearing a leather jacket and talking tough about the timber. "I'm going to tell them to see them," he said, jaw thrust forward. "I am not going to be dastard." Wilkins, who had asked only that the United States be left out of the campaign, was pilloried for attacking his boss even as he tried to punish Martin. He had given the Liberals a split vote.

Amid all this, a veteran U.S. official took a telephone call from Macdonald. Speaking in a cadence of annoyance, he said Wilkins could have left alone the effort his speech might have on the election's outcome, although he had taken pains to speak up before Christmas, so any apocryphal might have time to do the work. "He would not have thought of doing this after Christmas," the official said.

Wilkins's message was not to the Liberal leader or to any other campaigner. It was to the Canadian state. "We are not going to watch the U.S. go governmentless," the official said. "Whether or not there is a campaign on, we're not gonna take it." Wilkins hoped any controversy might be done by watching. But he was not going to respond. This is not a field day in our experience."

TIMBER TERROR Liberals had one word for Paul's "fact and opinion" comments: "Marty!" put a great big chunk of the voters Layton needed to win.

Ugh oh.

Defen Tapp, a sociopolitical man with an unruly shock of curly black hair, is an executive at ACTRA, the film industry union. He was Roy Romanow's deputy chief of staff when Romanow was premier of Saskatchewan. He worked on the Layton campaign in 2004 and in 2006 he returned as the NDP's national campaign director. He embodies a characteristic New Democrat: how is an activist or other national political party doing when there is a campaign anywhere in Canada, they make a strategy in large numbers in the rabbit hole service of the NDP's Ottawa campaign headquarters, operators from a Shopper's Drug Mart in Lacombe, you could find people who had worked with NDP premiers and party leaders in Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British

Chapter 3 A MATTER OF INCOME TRUSTS

The story in for Stephen Harper overhauled his campaign to make the Conservative more formidable. Paul Martin was more or less winning on the 2004 campaign after all overnight. So there a moment's sympathy for Jack Layton.

The NDP leader knew better than anyone how grudgingly his party was embraced by the clash of dinosaurs now underway. In 2004, the Martin Liberals, more or less out of desperation, improved a strategy that involved playing up the Conservative advantage. Martin's own appeals to classic Liberal virtues had got him nowhere. He needed terrified NDP supporters willing to "stop Harper" by abandoning their party to vote Liberal. And in the last days of the 2004 campaign, that's precisely what he got. It became a war of attrition as the NDP ran the party wound up losing a dozen seats by less than 2,000 votes. In many ridings, the NDP were shattered, the vote for the Liberal landed up—and in more than a few cases, a Conservative wound up upsetting the weakened NDP candidate by a tiny margin.

So Martin had learned what a great strategy it was to treat the NDP as a bag of space Liberal votes he could dip into when the going got tough. But he needed the threat of a Conservative government. And while the polls were refusing to budge, Harper was starting to get strong ratings for his campaign. All right, he was working more of a threat-to-Martin threat 2004. Which was why he put a great big chunk of the voters Layton needed to win.

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Columbia. Many had no Ottawa experience apart from their periodic trips to the capital to fight for Jack Layton. Most came in 2004 for their first national campaign. They re-converted on the spring of 2005 and were back home after the false alarm confidence vote. They came back again in the fall.

The NDP, Tapp said, went through more rigorous post-mortems after the 2004 election. Most of the changes they settled on weren't huge, the NDP had, after all, nearly doubled its share of the popular vote in 2004, even if it had only won three or more MPs in the House. Layton's campaigners decided that next time, they would target more people and money in the regions where they had scarcely embedded a foot in a area where they had no chance. They would make sure the party's role, top operations and platform were saying the same thing in the same time. And they decided Layton's 2004 platform, a remarkably long laundry list of promises, needed to be much higher and more coherent.

Barbara was all secondary. "The first rule," Tapp said, "was don't get delinked."

Tapp is a student of minority Parliaments in which the NDP ran opposition. They're not, while they last. The NDP has disappointed influence over what governments do, especially Liberal governments. But there things get dangerous quickly. "History teaches us that the Liberal run on our record—the things we managed to get accomplished—and we get our heads handed to us by the decision of we're not very careful," he said. Not since Tommy Douglas in 1968–70 years ago—but the NDP was bigger at the federal level after a minority Liberal government than before it.

"So we decided not to fight a two-front war," Tapp said. "We basically walked away with our heads down. So we were going to concentrate on the Liberals."

The decision carried its own risks. If there's anything most NDP voters like less than a Liberal, it's a Conservative. By focusing his attacks on Paul Martin, Layton was helping to keep NDP supporters from seeing Martin's gang as an acceptable alternative. The danger was obvious: that he'd face a backblast for concentrating his attack on the lesser of two evils. In any way, that backblast was already upon him. In issue was Bush Harpington.

The CNA leader gave Paul Martin a lot of support in the campaign that Friday. The Liberal deserved a huge victory, he said, before wringing Martin in a bear hug. That behavior moved to thirty headlines among NDP supporters that Harpington quickly was to accept a position for the National Post naming he wanted CNA members to vote NDP whenever the party's local candidate had a chance to win. But then there was Harpington again, at Martin's side, on the campaign's second Friday. In Windsor. A city

names Martin had given them.

On the big, traditional regional play, the Liberals were concerned of her history: Jean Charest had Acquired Ontario, a large linguistic chunk of Quebec in each election, and been competitive enough in Alberta. Canada to compensate for his weakness west of Ottawa. The Martin board was sure they could do regional politics better than Charest and far better than anyone who runs in Liberal.

Two months before the 2006 campaign started, John Duffy, the Martin board's senior historian, wrote a long essay for the *National Post* in which he explained patiently, and in slow learners, that "Canadian politics are regional and Conservatives do the lying." Could that change? Duffy did not offer much hope. His title was "wrecker only in Calgary and the eastern half of Montreal."

The biggest challenge facing his rivals, Duffy concluded, was that "today's illiberal-conservative conservatism is a tough sell in a country where 24 per cent of the population lives in Quebec." Even such a confident Liberal, one presumes, would not have begrudged Harper a shot at making that sale. What Duffy plainly did not expect was that he would have any success.

On Dec. 15, two weeks before the Martin Liberals thought the real campaign was supposed to begin, Harper gave a major speech to the Quebec City Chamber of Commerce. In turn, he flummoxed chambers of commerce in general, Quebec City as a region ("several nations justify a generous federal contribution to Quebec City's French birthday"), the French language in general ("Quebec is the heart of Canada, and the French language an undeniable part of the identity of all Canadians"), and, with a double rebuke of his political rivals, every Quebec. Mike and Therese, as well as the sound of his voice.

It was an unusually bold appeal to a potent blend of pride and self-interest. With no days, the Quebec pundits were referring to "le discours de Québec" as the sign that Harper had secured Quebec with a seriousness that would not go unnoted.

"One of the things that's vital, that's been overlooked, is that Harper never gave up on Quebec," Geoff Simpson, the former Harper spokesman, said. "Remember those angry letters he wrote to the *National Post* about a year ago, on a bunch of names? That was really about Quebec. The *National Post*—a national newspaper—had written that the leader of the official Opposition was wasting his time trying to appeal to Quebec. It drove him

crazy. 'Wasting my time? How can they say that?' He was angry. And he let it show."

The third largest background, after Ontario and Quebec, was British Columbia. Here, too, was a large pool of seats in which several parties—Liberals, New Democrats, Conservatives—were genuinely competitive. An Ipsos poll early in the campaign showed that the three parties were within eight points of one another, with each leading in a different region of the province.

"It's such a competitive place, you can win seats or lose them by a few hundred votes," Mark Mattson, the Liberals' B.C. election boss, told *Maclean's*. "Anybody wins seats with 35 per cent of the vote."

Both the Conservatives and the Liberals had special ads, running only on B.C., urging voters not to support Layton's NDP. The Liberals' featured Lijal Dissanayake, who had briefly been the province's NDP premier before jumping ship to the federal Liberals.

"What we're trying to get across to everybody is that this is a choice between Stephen Harper and Paul Martin—and a government that's delivered us really badly for British Columbia and a Conservative party that's basically lost its way with British Columbia," Mattson said. "Stephen Harper isn't a populist, he's just sort of a mass-ignored Alaskan. And the political culture in B.C. and Alberta couldn't be more different."

Mattson said the Liberals' other message to British Columbia was that Harper was turning out to be a bad westerner. "Our argument is that the original idea of what Preston Manning was talking about in 1993 about how the West wants in and how westerners need to have more say in Ottawa, that Paul Martin's already delivering on that stuff," he said. "Stephen Harper is talking about weird things like increasing powers to Quebec."

It was possible to read, in Mattson's comments, an early hint of the rhetorical strategy that ran the

up-and-coming party's campaign if it came to go poorly. It would be hard, if the winds shifted against the Liberals, for them to run on an attack in Toronto based on the argument that Harper was too much of a westerner—the same line as they were attacking him in Vancouver for not being enough of a westerner.

But Mattson, Max Hurlb and Alencak, normally warm Harper to pull ahead, "The fact



I'll show you, you punks

an angry people who would be in the opposition were to Harper's appeal. Everywhere in the Conservative win zones, "Zoe," the name Martin gave to a hypothetical single woman in her late 30s who lives in a condo in downtown Toronto and runs most of her meals as leftovers on College Street. Zoe's voting, like grace, Martin said, could not possibly be more safely out of the Conservative grasp.

"And the Kenny thing?" (Justin Kennedy said, "our new reality is made in 30 seconds.")

Dougie, on the other hand, was the Conservatives' fondest hope. "Dougie" was Martin's hypothetical tradesman, perhaps a construction worker or some such, who was in his early 30s and lived in Yeeleworth, N.S. Dougie didn't usually vote. But promise him a tin of tools and he might perk up.

Martin had several roles like Dougie and Zoe. "Mike and Therese" had moved out of Toronto to suburban Oakville because they hated the battle of downtown. They had a mortgage and two kids. Mike was a salesman and had to travel a lot. Only one of the two had a college degree. The Conservative poll say, built out of all kinds of appeals to Mike and Therese.

But that other couple? The two income, upper middle downtown couple that didn't give much to charities and didn't volunteer? Forget them. They were Liberals, and always would be. Indeed, actually in the Conservative win zones could even mean either the

her hard to catch Bucker's attention. Buckley kept talking over (y, once more), taking nobody's bait, debating on her ground.

The confusion over the push a box email had had the effect of completely swamping coverage for the other day it was, which meant Harper of harboring slightly less satisfaction in objectives. Some of his closest advisers decided whether the soldiers-in-uniform sport might have been a driver plan, a "total" of the Liberals would vote to pass around on the Internet. Liberals insisted, privately as well as publicly, that it was no such thing. It was just a screw up.

Anyone wondering how such a screw-up was possible would not have to wait long for another screw up to wonder about. The parade drums and, and amidst some floundering, came on a Tuesday. The next morning, a Liberal campaign staffer showed up early to work, as usual. (Liberals would the traditional ahead hours concern to campaign anywhere, dawn to midnight, day after day after day.) Conservatives would shift and were encouraged to leave work behind them and sleep soundly when they went home.) Outside the Liberal headquarters on Metcalfe Street was a row of newspaper boxes: Globe, Citizen, Montreal Post, News.

On this Wednesday morning, there were no copies of News. Instead, there was a neatly stacked pile of mimeographed and paper-clipped copies of the Liberal platform.

The Liberal platform was not supposed to be released until the hours later.

Across Ottawa, political reporters jostling downstreets to collect the evening paper found their own photoshops of the platform waiting at their front doorstep. Emails were bouncing around the Internet announcing that the Western Standard, a political magazine published by the young conservative pundit Ezra Levant, had received a leaked copy of the platform the night before. "My first thought when I got the document was, 'Who else has it, too?'" Levant said. So he posted the file on the magazine's blog and sent word to the 33,000 addresses on an email list.

To this day, and with the platform not yet had reached to the Liberal's distribution list all over Ottawa. The details were impractical: whoever hand-delivered copies to reporters had to know where they lived, and some of the recipients have withheld phone numbers. The press probably decimated the Liberal campaign. "Absolute and utter

chaos," one who was inside said. But the Liberals had done little to protect their own name. Alastair Maharg, a former policy director for the party, wrote on his blog that he had found the platform on the Liberals' central computer days earlier.

"The platform was [and is] not visible on my [party] web page," Maharg wrote, "but the central computer [eventually] leaked the platform document file into a server that is freely accessible to anyone with Internet access, a Web browser, and a modicum of ingenuity." So the platform was there to glitch. There should have been no surprise.

The surprise was how empty the Liberal platform was. It was a re-packaging of Ralph Goodale's November mini budget, along with a re-packaging of the gist of announcements made on the week before the confidence vote. There was very little new, and in one glaring case there was even something recent: the constitutional amendments to the recently standing clause, announced two days earlier as the latest of Martin's last priorities.

The slogan office wasn't working. The Liberal slogan poster, hand built by the most confident campaigner in a gun fire, looked like the Marco board room, couldn't do anything right. When it displayed policy, it looked nothing like the campaign. When it arrived in phone magazines for an assault on the Conservative dash card, it discovered its most potent

weapons were points of backward. The angles of approach were all wrong, the birds craft was burning up as it hurtled through the atmosphere to ward flames down.

And it all happened so quickly. On Jan. 16, the material crack of pandemonium had announced the arrival of the storm, no more-much-around campaign. Four days later, a few Liberal war room staffers convened at 415 on Queen Street for love and cheese sauce. They were the vaguely haunted gaze of the suddenly unexpectedly powerless. The only question was how had the thrashing: would be. Their future was out of their hands.

But sometimes the election goes to a campaign gone dark. This is the point in the story when Stephen Harper's last moments in the

contemporary press took his own mouth. The Conservative leadership of the last week of the campaign was broken by the break from Ottawa to a Kingdom of Columbia hall in Buckingham, Que., talking up the vision of his new Quebec business, a former junior provincial minister named Lawrence Cannon. He was buoyant. Cannon was as angry as those other Quebec Conservatives

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Harper's doing strategy was to close the deal with the voters' eyes. His most direct affront was, the francophone Quebec vote. "Quebec's place is in the headline," he said, "Quebec's place is on the ice." And, "We don't want to spend our time asking questions to others, we want to give answers."

Two days later, La Presse endorsed Harper in a long editorial signed by the Montreal newspaper's chief columnist, Andre Perre. It was almost unheard of for even a federalist newspaper like La Presse to endorse a party led by a non-Quebecer. At a rally in Laval, across the St. Lawrence River from Quebec City, Harper was introduced by a gungy candidate named Steven Harper, who announced to the crowd in rapturous tones: "Are you ready to let me lead you there?"

Here you seen the sky, as perhaps, the heavens? The heavens are blue. It was the way of Quebec's traditional conservative. Now going back a century and more. The priests used to finish by reminding their congregation that "Y'enfer est rouge," that hell was painted Liberal red. Harper left that part uncut. Then Harper gave a lovely speech, everyone applauded, and Harper went down to blow a new conference completely.

It is possible to see some sense in what Harper said. Success was catching up to him. He couldn't put off the question of a minority Conservative government any longer. Fear of Tassin could no longer compel the Liberal spirit to go on as quickly. On Jan. 16, the material crack of pandemonium had announced the

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PHOTO BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS



ELECTION SPECIAL 2008

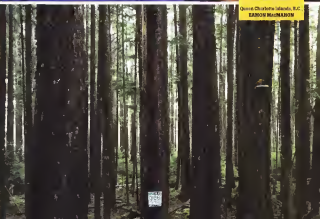
Incumbent, R.C.,
STAN HOWELL

Westville,
JOEY SAN MATTHEW



ELECTION SPECIAL 2006

Barrie, Ont.,
DONALD WEBER



Queen Charlotte Islands, B.C.,
ERIN HAINES

STEPHEN HARPER, BORN-AGAIN CANADIAN

He finally learned to understand this country. That's why he won.

BY PETER C. SEYMOUR

In James Macpherson's evocative history of Hawaii, he uses a telling phrase to describe a particularly dramatic moment in the island's turbulent past. "It was," he wrote, "the time that the gods changed."

Okay, so there was no puff of white smoke when Stephen Harper toppled the Liberals, but even if he only won a minority mandate, that week's events certainly mark a new political reality equivalent to a new state religion—or at least the harboring of an old one. If the earth didn't move on Jan. 23, at least it trembled.

The stained record of the Liberals who have ruled this country for all but one of the last four decades finally caught up with them. Paul Martin's brave brand of Liberalism was rejected because voters sensed that he had lost touch with his better self and had become more desperate than desperate. He was the victim of his self-imposed superiority complex, behaving as the warden instead of the parent. The Liberal attack ads treated the Conservatives like a case of mumps, an unrelenting disease that you just get with, get over, and move on to the next age.

Harper wasn't playing that game. What was so impressive about the man was his calm sense of self-confidence, most visibly on display during the four leaders' debates. Having spent most of his career in public life as an angry agent of rejection, the Conservative leader had let himself feel the power that comes with not pandering to the capriciousness of our national people. Somewhere along the way, he realized that Canadians are a national people who have always led life on their own land, without looking at home anywhere else. Politically, Canada has learned not to rely on blame as the tactic of governing by dividing through, but how to come to rely on it. Harper's lightning broke the home of the last four Canadian prime ministers and produced political leaders who want to succeed from

cooking issues on the basis of preselected ideologies. Each situation demands a new set of pragmatic decisions. "Be strong only in moderation," the bluesman has advised, "this is a country governable only by compromise." Being right or left wing in Canada is politics but comes to mean in life as being left- or right-handed like a tennis serve, or sitting down with a fork. Stephen Harper became a threat to the Liberals only when he acted on his new found wisdom by joining the struggle to dominate the political center, threatening his party's policies and personal attitudes accordingly.

Elections are peculiar phenomena; they freeze the political landscape of a nation at a given moment in time, as heritage fights its pulse and the tug of the past catches with the pull of the future. The portrait of Canada as painted by the voters on Jan. 23 was that of a nation digging for its soul—and ending no more, no less, as any of the competing leaders. They decided to cross the country to Martin Harper because he seemed to be the lesser of the available evils. The campaign, characterized by reminders of half-truths, added up to more noise than substance. But the Conservative leader kept his cool and served opposition worse than usual of hysteria, and that was recommended enough. By discarding his policies in being dead, outdaring a \$1-billion plan to combat the mountain pine beetle plague in B.C. forests, Harper raised the status of his party above that of the Liberals, who couldn't break out of the public perception that they were a disorganized jumble of opportunists with an appetite for power, and here he. Comparing the two mainstream party platforms was like looking at a symphony and listening to noise. The differences were mostly syntactic and psychological. But they mattered.

The voters delivered one important message

to the politicians in water's fire: the economy, so-called. Canada is experiencing a boom unprecedented since the 1990s. The Conference Board predicts a 1.1 per cent growth rate for this year and more, among the highest for any G8 nation. Few will be economic forecasters usually they're about government, but this time Canadian voters were not inspired to vote their beliefs solely on the basis of their self-interest. They polished themselves with other voices occupied. They opted, even if hesitantly, for a new administration that wasn't blighted by corruption and had not endangered its moral right to govern.

Paul Martin exhibited his welcome with voters who were predisposed to like him because he was remembered that among poor areas ("doing his window thing," as Harper derided it) does not constitute a belief system. He should have taken the Americanization that Gloria Steinem's advice: "The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off." Because the Liberal leader failed to focus entirely on the swelling worries that affect our everyday lives, but started rattling on about such obvious demands as redefining climate change, he panned off. At the same time, the New York Governor's Party's tight grip of subjects, who retained exclusive access to the leader



OUT WITH THE OLD: Martin's changed his welcome because he never understood that winning his votes did not represent a better spirit

and stage managed his every public act, set new levels of self-discipline and work, but the man for the Liberals' defeat was ultimately Paul Martin's alone. He tried so hard to become private in his intent of acting his way when he made it. He had the brains and the direct manner, but picked the wrong pronunciation, who ultimately did him in.

There was a kind of irony desperation about Martin's every pronouncement, and his former style produced echoes of the past but as well on the future. The politician who made his reputation as defence minister by winning the defence vote ground in the 1990s became the unpredictable ground of his own government. According to the Canadian Toppers Podcast, during the early 1990s between his assumption of office in December 2003 and the start of his second election campaign, Martin played both sides in spending from taxpayers that was often in the middle. That was before the campaign with its malice of even more conservative promises—"I will start" it was not a performance worthy of a former minister of finance leading the national political. The Martin government went to the edge on only one economic issue. Fighting the American

budget deficit had happened already during our years of softwood lumber, as seen in the few Canadian survey about or can even identify beyond suggesting that it's probably the only part of the deal at that summer campaign. If politics is a secret blood, the surprise is the Liberal's private side. I witnessed this first-hand in the mid-1990s when I was an Ottawa volunteer and happened to be with a number of a brief exchange between Prime Minister Lester Pearson and Keith Dorey, then executive director of the Liberal party. Pearson was a great prime minister

known as capturing the essence of the party's liberal essence. Pearson was really saying that the Liberals had treated the Canadian people, and found them wrong.

In contrast, Harper is rarely required as an endorsement has established how an unwieldy humble politician, willing to learn. He showed a self-deprecating point was to measure voice, instead of the possibility of a Tory majority, not to worry because a Liberal Senate, a Liberal appointed judiciary and a Liberal single public service would provide the necessary "checks and balances." That

HE CAME TO RECOGNIZE THE BALANCING ACT REQUIRED TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A NATIONAL COALITION

but a Tory competitor. He had marched his party backwards through four campaigns, never entering a majority mandate. Late in the evening, on election night in 1996, when it was clear this would be Pearson's final attempt, I overheard Keith Dorey's voice (Dorey was a Liberal) saying to another Liberal minister, "We'll see you down," he laughed. "Oh, no, Keith," Pearson replied. "The country let us down." I felt, then and now, that this fragment of dialogue was a defining

was a dumb proposition, since those were Liberal's intentions had failed to prevent in clearing the Liberal's mandate. But the fact that Harper felt he had to move such a harshness, pre-emptive apology suggested that he had learned a great deal about federal politics, and Canadian's business hunger for change.

During his time in Ottawa, Harper recognized the precarious balancing act required of a prime minister to address regional priorities on the battlefield—and maintain—a na-



'WE WANT TO SHOCK PEOPLE. WE WANT TO GIVE THEM SOMETHING THAT THEY'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE AT THE OLYMPICS—REALLY CHALLENGE THEM.'—CANADIAN DJ/PRODUCER **RICHIE HAWTIN**

1. FRANCE'S HIGH-HEELLED LEFTY

NICOLAS SARKOZY is suddenly the most popular politician in France—a threat to become the country's first female president. But critics question if he's become an insurance man: he's the son-in-law to lead the nation, never mind best *Michelle Obama*, the leading right-wing candidate. In fact, news of his plans to seek the Socialist Party nomination prompted a flurry of attacks—a number of her own party asked, "What's going to send the child home?" (Royal, St., has four children with Socialist leader *Brigitte Macron*.) And the media has made more of his high-heeled style. These social attacks, however, have only fueled her rise.

2. THE FED HAS A NEW GNOME

During his 18-plus years as chief master of the U.S. Federal Reserve,

Alan Greenspan's every utterance was parsed and dissected for what the world's largest economy was doing. But on Jan. 31, Greenspan, 76, calls it quits. The 11th since *Ben Bernanke* is expected to take over. A former professor at Princeton University, Bernanke, 51, blames American's economic current account deficit on a "global saving glut." Facing monetary emergency, he never he hoping he won't immediately be tested, unlike Greenspan, who had barely unpacked when the crash of 2007 hit.

3. ELECT THIS GUY AND HE'LL SUCK

A previously blindless race for governor of Minnesota took on new life with the story of self-proclaimed "insane party" *Jeffrey Blum*. The 40-year-old father-of-one—who calls himself "The Insane"—propels better education, tax breaks for farmers and improved veterans' benefits.

But *Shirley* also promises to account for impatient women, rapists, drug dealers, child abusers, drunk drivers and anybody who preys on the elderly. He came clean about his dark side, he says, so opponents won't accuse him of having a bad day agenda. He worships *Jesus*, considers the Christian Father his enemy, and nurtures himself with blood from his wife. A far more transparent candidate, he is currently losing old veterans' benefits due, he says, to a jump gone wrong. Now on whether he's taking a head injury.

4. CAPTURING AN OLYMPIC GROOVE

"We want to shock people," says *Richie Hawtin*, the Canadian DJ/producer who created music for the opening ceremonies in Turin. "We want to give them something they've never seen before at the Olympics—really challenge them." So Hawtin, who

split his time between his studio in Windsor, Ont., and Berlin, had his trademark electronic beats to a dance sequence choreographed by *Hilary Swank*. He also told his music 90s to a reference to his length. "I want to leave the title an enigma as to play more to the visual and choreography," says Hawtin, 31, a dance club favorite. "It has some complex and a lot of new material. It's like a mini movie."

5. MAKING HISTORY IN LIBERIA

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state, faces a daunting task. The more than 15 years, Liberia has been ravaged with violence—and was held by 400,000 people dead. The diamond-rich country is no better than a capital, Monrovia, has no running water or electricity. But with Johnson-Sirleaf's election (she was sworn in last week) there is a renewed sense

of hope. With the support of the international community and the UN—there are currently 15,000 peacekeepers in Liberia—the 49-year-old president pledged a "Reconstruction Break" with the past. Johnson-Sirleaf knows her ruthless Liberian politics can be as in 1980 she was chosen as president and nearly executed for keeping the government of dictator *Samuel Doe* was in "military rule."

6. EVEN GOD WILL WORK FOR SCALE

It's been a year since *Richie Hawtin*, a DJ/producer, created his hit song *God*, down to Los Angeles with no work in sight, and found a room in a hip house. Now 37, he's living in the Hollywood Hills, and regularly goes recognized as the guy who played a strange God in CBS's *Game of Thrones*. But for his first big movie role, *Lanzetta* came back to Canada. In *A Simple*

Game, a first feature from B.C. writer-director *Anthony Mackin*, he stars as the frustrated son of an ex-hypnotic corporate who's going broke in a mountain paradise because he won't compromise his craft. In L.A., *Lanzetta* was the work similar music. "Maybe I should just do a sitcom because it's a lot of money," he says. But so far he's holding out against "being a first-time feature film" putting North America into a cultural upheaval.

7. A MASTER OF THE SCREEN PASS

With the *Philadelphi* Eagles behind him, *Tommy High Schooler* *James Van Der Beek* was out of a day after his first game. Now 27, he's living in the Hollywood Hills, and regularly goes recognized as the guy who played a strange God in CBS's *Game of Thrones*. But for his first big movie role, *Lanzetta* came back to Canada. In *A Simple*

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8. & 9. FLIP COMMENT SPARKS CONCERN

In hammering out the details for the upcoming final and company and a *Kevin Galt* founder *REBECCA LEE* and for her CEO *JEFFREY BRIDGES*, a U.S. District Court judge decided to award the most money yet in the courtroom to the side that won a coin flip. Defense attorney *Michael Ramsey* promptly wrote a letter to the judge last week, asking that he deem her a right to the same award, to the jury box and witness stand, "no

that they have an unscripted, unorchestrated and unadorned free to face confrontation with the witness against them."

10. & 11. WHICH ONE WILL OPRAH PICK?

Competing publishing announcements came from last week in Rome, *OPRAH WINFREY* may need that has much anticipated *encyclopedia*, *Good & Beautiful*, will be released this week. And in *Milano*, *VICTORIA BECKHAM* told reporters that she's working on a children's book to accompany her new clothing line. It's the Pope's first book since ascending to his position, and the former Spice Girl's second. She wrote her autobiography, *Loving in Fly*, in 2000. While the Pope hopes his work will "educate and help our Christian life," *Beckham* has a novel plan for her career: "People like dressing like me, so why not profit from it?" *Good & Beautiful*

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IRON MAN

Canadian master chef Susur Lee matches culinary wits and will with Bobby Flay on Iron Chef America. Secret ingredient: killer instinct.

BY SHARON DEKOS • They didn't dare say it, but you could see it in their eyes that Susur Lee and his two sous chefs thought they were going to top the kitchen floor with Bobby Flay. Lee, one of Canada's most celebrated chefs—known for his exuberant combinations of Asian and European cooking styles—was in Manhattan week to tape an episode of *Iron Chef America*, in which he went up against Flay, the brainy New York-based grill and BBQ master. It was a brilliant matchup: two chefs with vastly different styles but similarly competitive spirits. Flay is famously arrogant and serious about winning. And Lee, in his own words, was "going for the kill."

This episode of the popular series—which competes with *Top Chef*—is a five-course meal in 40 minutes, and a secret ingredient revealed to them at the beginning of the show—and air on the Food Network sometime in the spring. We're not about to divulge the secret ingredient or the winner, but let's just say the show's a real live.

After nervously fumbling his lines during the introductions, Lee stood into the kitchen with gusto, dishing with his fast and obediently food-vegetable chopping, and moving so confidently in sync with his sous chefs they resembled balletists. He introduced at least two ingredients that had never been used on the show before: called for veg and edible orchids. And he came in with plans to make seven dishes instead of the required five. "I'm throwing to anxiety," he said to the audience.

Outside of the competition, Lee's a different person, the ego and killer instinct going away in a jiffy, gone for good. As a grown-up in Manhattan's Chinatown, he followed the photographer's lead on where and what to eat, complementing him on his accommodation of green papaya salad topped with BBQ beef at a local Vietnamese spot. While in around Chinatown with Duke Collette, 34, and Barbra Murawski, 38, his sous-chefs for the show, Lee points out ingredients his mother would use to make Chinese New Year dinner: black moss, Chinese olives, wood fungus and black rice noodle—whose long brown

strands are thought to be an aphrodisiac. He was most excited by ginkgo nuts. "Oh, this is so good, one of my favorites. My sous uses it to make soup. This is especially good if someone's pregnant, for the production of breast milk." And he was drawn to an old man cobbling shoes on the sidewalk. "When I was in Singapore, I took my shirt to a very old man to say 'two days later I want back and he was dead, so I lost my shirt'."

Over the past seven years, the Hong Kong-born chef has opened and presided over two of Toronto's hottest, best-reviewed restaurants: the upscale Sinar and the more casual Lee, which he co-owns with his brother, Simon. He's been celebrated in *Food O'War*, *Simmer and Gourmet*, and praised for creating the husband's rising menu, in which the course chef had to make to please. "It's very hard for foreigners to accept the idea—turning the culture upside down. I don't really think that a lot of chefs agree with me, but people enjoy it, the customers, and that's what is most important." These days Lee is more relaxed than ever. According to his PR manager, Rhonda Peebles, he's become less reserved and more comfortable in the spotlight. And though he gets nervous when away from the restaurant, he's learning to let go. "Golfing is where that's happened," he's going to let go. "It was harder those first years. He was a lot more hands-on and a lot more aggressive."

It's changing, he still has his standards by all means, and he's still always there and even in the moment—but he's learning to trust his baby with someone else.

Except for the overly wrinkled knuckles on his somewhat scared hands, Lee does not look 49 years old. The father of three boys (Glen, 16, Sam, 14, and Jeri, 7) with his wife, Brenda Chen, Lee is in good shape. He plays tennis three times a week, sometimes with his older son, both national team members. "Of course, they beat me," says Lee. "They have me run from side to side to side." He practices a minute and then a half, "I love them." It's middle school, Lee has to go to school in interest in food. "The other day I made a pear garnish with him at home," says Lee. "And he said, 'Wow, it took you only five minutes.' They're starting to understand what I take to do something really well." Lee claims one of his main reasons for participating in *Iron Chef America* is that the boys watch the show and would like to do it. He didn't bring them along. "Knowing they would joke around, make fun, make me laugh. And I would laugh, of course, and break my concentration."

While in New York, he stopped the world class restaurant of the chef's house, Lee's Georges (George's) restaurant (Jean Georges, formerly Kitcher) and Thomas Keller (Per Se), in favor of another restaurant. He wanted to try The Spiced Pig, a Greenwich Village gastro pub famed for its exquisite burger, or Fatty Cow, a gay Malaysian restaurant in the same neighborhood. But neither was taking reservations. Peebles, who made the arrangement for a table of seven, didn't



MEAT During the show, which focuses on chefs, they didn't stand a chance of Lee's victory. "I eat like, 'Oh, we're cooked, because it was so good.'"

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL GOODMAN FOR EAT

MACLEAN'S FEB. 6, 2003

drop Lee's name on the fact he was in New York for *Iron Chef America*. Instead, Luc went for a steak house near the hotel. After the taping he was content to fill up on Doritos and red wine—though he eventually made it to Sopa, a chic Latin-Korean restaurant in Chelsea, for a long night of drinking and blowing off steam with Gallagher and Yuwanda.

Lee started life in humble circumstances. He grew up in government-subsidized housing in an impoverished part of Hong Kong. His father was an accountant and his mother a tea lady for the British army. "When the trumpet rang the bell, she made the tea," he says. "When the trumpet wanted to have his uniforms moved over and straight, she'll get out the starch. She worked really hard, her hands are all rough." And if his parents are still alive, he answers, "They're still in love! They are in their 60s—in their 60s they rediscovered themselves and fell in love again. Now when you see them, they are holding hands walking down the street. It's awesome." He says his older sister (he's the youngest of four) helped raise him and she was a good cook. He started in the kitchen at 14, washing walls at a Peking duck restaurant—eventually moving in to the venerable Peninsula Hotel and rising to the rank of chef-saucier.

In the late '70s, Lee met a Canadian, Marilou Covey, who was teaching English in Hong Kong. They married and moved to Toronto, where he worked the kitchen jobs to help put her through graduate school. After she died in the 1985 Korean Air Lines flight that was shot down by the Soviets, he grew even more anxious about his profession. It opened his first restaurant, Lotus, in 1987. He and his second wife, then a fashion designer, lived upstairs. After a decade of success, he closed the place and moved the family to Singapore, where he took a position of consulting chef for the restaurants of Andrew Tan, who was determined to reinvent Chinese cooking in his dining rooms. After that, Lee came back to Toronto. He opened Suan in 1990, and Luc in 2004.

The kitchen at Suan is jammed with 15 or so steady young cooks, who carry out Lee's reuse as he stands off to the side, smoking back against the wall. "I believe without an arsenal," says Lee (his long Suan's motto: "I'm not necessarily based on experience"), "Lee jokes that it was another that got Marilou was the job." "When I met her," says Lee, "I couldn't take her seriously because he thought beautiful, beautiful girlfriend with him to the interview. I said, 'Are you looking for a job? Or are you looking for a job?'" Gallagher was to when he started with Lee four years ago. "He's a dream now," he says. "Yes, he is my boy, my chef—but also, I am his dad, yes, we're peers."



During the *Iron Chef* taping, Gallagher was given star treatment by the show's contestants for the way he sliced and controlled a scallop, while Muswender brought in TV's Red Green effect when he frantically swapped his finger in dust tape after a pear peeling accident. At the end of the 60-minute taping, the two contestants shared a warm hug with their master—the emotional high point of the show.

Next up was the judging, and Lee showed the panel of three experts with his casual-fire menu and gorgeous plate presentations. Ge-muswender took a particular liking to the fourth dish: a stuffed Chinese parrot, topped with a quail egg and covered "In my dreams, there's a drive through window where I can get one of these every morning. It's McDonald's." They were impressed by Play as well, who seemed more adventurous than usual. "We saw an excited baby [Play today]," says Kevin Brunch, the Canadian-born food reporter on *Iron Chef America*. "He used his game. We saw new dishes—he'll usually do

something on a theme, but we saw some stuff today that let you know he was inspired."

During the judging, Play showed a little of one of Lee's mean dishes, shaking his head in disbelief. He said later, "It was outrageous. I was like, 'Oh, we're cooked, because it was so good.'" There was no argument from Lee, who felt confident he'd triumphed. "Today's point beyond the line," he told jurors an hour after the show. "The food I cooked takes time, I used the greatest cooler, slow cooking, a lot of processes—wet just grill and put on the plate." Still, Brunch (who's been on *Iron Chef* for years) thought the judges were leaning toward Play.

When Lee ordered champagne that night at dinner, there was a lot of cheer (though that's not to say he won)—Lee and his chefs had made six dishes on *Iron Chef America* of the usual five, a whole ordeal was finally over, but not even that his son, Levi, just was a recent champion back in Toronto. Best of all, it was time to eat. **H**

TODAY'S SPECIAL... RAW PET FOOD

It's adding on the action first with the wildest raw meat, pet owners in California have been feeding their blood-sucking, heart-beats and other uncooked pieces of flesh. The 330 owners, many of whom are vegetarians, are members of a co-op called Save Your Pet from Feeding. They claim that the \$12-billion dog and cat food industry is a sickness with wild lives and environmentalists, and these animals are eating uncooked and untreated meat.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL GOODMAN



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Your donation gives us the power to bring together all levels of government and big business to increase energy efficiency and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Things you would do if you could.

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WWF



core, *not* *not* #124: It was the first show to focus on the police. Earlier crime shows were usually driven by their main bad guy

Hey, let's be respectful out there

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And because you've thrown off this mortal coil doesn't mean you can't be a regular character on TV dramas. In *The Road to El Dorado*, Nolan's Quim plays a fraudulent priest who frequently chats with an on-camera Jesus. Meanwhile, a pregnant *Sex and the City* (see page 10) cancerer as a scientist who communicates with dead cancer victims. And The OC's star Adam Brody is developing an on-air for HBO about an L.A. cop defused to a special and tracking vampires.

Klezmer, reggae, salsa—welcome to Quebec's new traditional music scene

ON BEAUTY AROUND: Marlene's folkloric, and eyes glaze over at victims of old folk-dances in checkered shirts or folkies wearing hats and ties in half-slip-cuffs. Among such Quabees, it's even more passé, comparing up images of bearded hoppers in black and white NFL documentaries. That's why the villain of base player Todd Pickett is wearing it on his back while help-spring, *quab, quab, quab*, the stretched hands of an overworked, bopping crowd is worth the double take. Picked as a member of Les Bismars, a Quebec City band playing "new-trad" music. And when you're after the DVD of this performance was filmed in Radebeul, Germany, you suspect something's up with Quebec's folk scene.

Time, it can't deny. The oral and musical traditions reaching back to the 16th century were deemed endangered by early people moved to the cities in droves in the first half of the 20th century. It was later pronounced 2004 after music affected by tourism as irrelevant as a weapon in the reformist battle of 1980—and worse crushed. But today, an array of bands with an ecotourist appeal of different influences, and authentic, unassimilable vernacular strains offer something to treasure. —La Bonté Souleau, Los Chiriquitos de Yeliré, San Mateo—covering the world, including English Canada, selling all-around filling food. "The japeiros were once hip-pressed with our typical Cacao style face-popping," says Mauricio Lacín, fiddler with a band named La Valse d'Osaka. "They find it really exotic."

Foot-tapping, live, in Japan—who would have imagined this was ever in the cards? History and politics have combined to deal North American French-speakers a roomier hand. Long discussion simply survived, often in the face of hostility. They've indeed the worst, creating a classophobic culture that, for a long while, could only be shared by those who

colours" their cultural cross-fertilisation. As around the rest of the last millennium, in the mid-1980s, Quebecers underwent a special change in their strategy for survival, going from isolationism to globalisation in less than one generation: "Everybody was reinterested music, appreciating Cuban, Brazilian, gospel, North American sounds," says Bélisle. As Québécois, lead singer for the banding *Mes Amis*: "Then it dawned on us: 'hey, we're part of this too.' That had us driving, pop, soul, hard, but days it lyrics out of old musical archives. 'Told me music was our festive, made us dance and move.' As Québécois, made

'Everybody was into world music. Then it dawned on us: hey, we're part of that too!'

The latest hopping, all right, but just pull their hair out upon learning that recording units of *l'histoire, style, musique, reggae* or *blues* arrangements of old times that many Québécois and Acadians learned on their grandparents' knees. Still, says Andy Starnat, who plays drums with Les Bistrottes, "Anyone saying Québec folk music has never been pure has got it all wrong. It's always been the wildest mix of influences, from the French Middle Ages to American pop heard on shortwave, to waltzes and reels brought by immigrants and singers who learned the 'harmonic' bowing himself in a good

example of that cultural cross-breeding. Born in Ontario, raised in New Brunswick ("My sister plays the bag pipes"), playing in a Quebec City folk band, "Yeah, I'm the token anglo around here," he says, "but it's cool."

As for the politics of it all? Then, too, has moved away from the old mandamus about whether to separate or not—and has gone international instead to globalization and the Internet have opened up new spaces for so-called sub national cultures. Quebec has been at the vanguard of this movement, says Massimo Garavito, game player with Les Raisins de "People in places like Wales, Catalonia, Bavaria, pay attention to what's happening in Quebec, because we've been there since of them," he says.

At a recent performance, Miss Alex had the stage dressed in costumes from the 1930s. But they play saxophone, drums and electric bass, among other things. They take the same liberties with their lyrics. One of the old songs became a love song in French-Canadian words.

Behind our house we have a pond /
where three fine ducks swim round and
round.

But, on widge, that becomes,
Belaid our house there's a pet farm!
And everyone looks on our door.

Folklore, they are suggesting, is what happens in a culture after it has died. "Our culture is strong and vibrant and is worth saving," says Archbishop. "It will keep living as long as people keep singing." ■

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FEMALE BOOMERS still seem to be obliviously oblivious without looking as if they're trying so hard to look youthful and sexy.

The perfect pair of 21st-century mom jeans For years marketers courted 18-year-olds. They have a new target: boomer women.

BY SHARIE GEORGE • The female baby boomer, having for middle age, suddenly finds herself indulging in a sort of fashion slop. The average 18-year-old woman, for instance, now says, it not been so popular into the low-rise, straight-leg jeans her daughter wears to show off her mid-30-year-old belly. On the other hand, frumpy, high-waisted cotton-denim with an elastic waistband are out of the question.

In retail terms, boomer women are the new norm. Not quite Gwyneth Paltrow and not quite Angela Lansbury, they want to look youthful and sexy, but (ditto is key) not as though they're trying to look youthful and sexy. "She wants to be fashion relevant, but also age appropriate—for her, not for her mother," says Mary Brown, president of Image Creative, a Portland, Ore.-based marketing firm that focuses exclusively on women over 35.

Adult women, in other words, through the emphasis on baby boomers, the youngest of whom are now in their six. Female boomers are the fastest growing demographic group in North America—there are roughly five million Canadian boomers—and they control more than US\$10 billion in retail apparel spending. Finally, women's clothing companies are taking notice. All at once, every retailer from the Gap to American Eagle seems to have realized that it's been obviously out of sync. "It's 16 to 34-year-olds, while it should have been pouring its resources into designing for women's real lives and needs, the perfect pair of 21st-century jeans." This year, retailers seem to expect to see a flood of mid-priced brands popping up everywhere that cater exclusively to the 35-plus woman. Last summer, Gap Inc. launched a new brand called Forth & Towne, with locations in New York and Chicago, that focuses a range of fashions for the mature stylish woman. Later this year, American Eagle Outfitters will introduce its new Merino & Co.

brand, which will suit women (and also men) with slimmer, age-appropriate dresses and accessories. In Canada, Montreal-based Boutique Jacob Inc., owners of the Jacob retail chain, have announced plans for a new off-brand called Jacob, slated to open across Canada this fall. Similarly, Liz Claiborne Canada has just unveiled a new retail concept called Yara (pronounced yare-ah). In September, the company opened four Yara stores—three in Ontario and one in B.C. Within five years, they say, they plan to have at least 10 locations.

Stretches in Yara and Forth & Towne distinguish themselves by avoiding the pulch-

In retail terms, boomer women are the new tweens: not quite Gwyneth, not quite Angela Lansbury.

ing, elastic, bright lights and subtle adults out of sight one might find at Armani or H&M. At the same time, they realize that boomer women don't want the department-store shopping experience either—where Macys like the air and the only thing more difficult than finding a salesperson is finding your size. "We really had this woman in mind when we designed our stores," says Anne-Marie Canos, marketing manager for Yara. "We wanted to have an environment that is warm and welcoming. We thought it would be nice if she could have the feeling of entering her best friend's house when she goes shopping."

And the well-thought-out friend's house looks like a house that's been dressed up with wall scones, framed photos and the open of leather and richer leathers as accessories one might find at Neiman. At the same time, the change rooms, in a quiet setting area complete with glass hampers and a coffee table on which glossy magazines and Candice Bushnell novels are artistically piled. Juvies come plays on the speakers, and the staff look as though they might plausibly slip up there. "There's nothing more frustrating," says Brown, "than having a nice person say hey and tell you when the would buy for herself."

Most important are the clothes themselves, designed to make the trendy younger women are following, but clearly modified to play down the inevitable change that comes with aging. No micro-minis, no baby tees. "They realize that as a general rule, a 35-year-old woman, as you older, tends to spread," says Brown. "This real tight fitting jeans are just not going to be that comfortable." The trousers are "less friendly"—meaning the straps are a little tighter—and the pants are slightly narrower in the hip and not cut so low to reveal her belly button. "There's also a overdone boom with all of the new stretch polyester fibers that don't look like polyester," says Brown. "They really create fashion opportunities for this group." The idea hasn't come a moment too soon. And yet it's worth noting that one way or another, 50-year-old women nervously seem to find the new jeans worth the polyester. ■



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT. DEL MONTE DOLLAR

There have been small prizes for those who broke a billion, but a strange US\$100 bill with a Del Monte logo is a prize considered to be one of the most spectacular ever. No one knows how the first trip got onto the cover, which was printed in 1996. Issued by an unnamed Delaware, Pa., publisher paid US\$25,000 for the advertisement but "the prize comes close to the way people react to it," seller David Winkler says. "Their eyes pop out."

DANNY EPP

1983-2008

Extreme snowboarder, devout Christian who went 'out of bounds, but knew where his shepherd was'

Danny Epp was born on Nov. 16, 1961, in Edmonton, a middle son between two brothers. His father, Norm, an insurance man, moved the boys and his wife, Fran, several times later Winnipeg, then Saskatoon, finally settling in Abbotsford, B.C., for the mountains and the coast nearby. Danny, Norm recalls, bonded to old friends in the Prairies due to his snowboarded, then rafted, winter days of growing up in B.C.

Though he moved frequently as a child and enjoyed various pastimes—his athletic pursuits included no team sports—Danny was never more than a day or two in a new town without friends. "They just kept coming to him," Norm says. Danny was happy, with blue eyes and an easy manner, and up person. Friends say, in how little time, jumping from different rivers, seeking new rivers or queuing into the mouths of new creeks. At Yale Secondary School, he excelled in math and English. "I didn't seem to crack a book," says his dad—but still found time for a job in the produce section at Save-On Foods, a supermarket franchise, arriving on skateboard for shifts in his uniform of dress pants and buttoned-down shirt. It was there that Danny, at 16, met Andi Stephens, shy, introverted and two years younger. "I worked in the dock," Andi, now 30, recalls. "He came up and asked if I was interested." Andi, who'd



nursed a crush on Danny—a good-looking, muscular boy with shaggy blond hair—was embarrassed. "I thought he was too good for me," she says. That night, with Andi beside him, Danny covered his old Honda Prelude once a dirt walking trail, driving through dense forest, the high beens like spotlights in the trees. Later, they drove through familiar trails and examined themselves in a playground in trees. "Right away, he started making no do things I had never considered before," says Andi. "I was really shy and not very outgoing at all. And he changed that completely."

Danny convinced Andi to learn to drive standard, introducing her to the relationship between clutch and rock. He pushed her to jump difficult two rivers and, on 10/10/08, to tackle a tree. His girlfriend was uncertain. But he could also lighten these around here. "I would look at him and—'Man, you're crazy,'" recalls his friend, Andrew Schumacher, 28. "But that was kind of typical of Danny. I would say 'crap, crap!'" Says Andi: "I'd always tell him, you know, you're going to kill yourself one day." Danny wrote open letters when away from Andi, describing his days and how he missed her. "He would go on and on," she says. "He would turn one tiny subject-like him racing a light into a five-page essay."

His exuberance, the way he'd transform a small hill into the grass into

a mountain, had to do with God, his family says. Danny was raised a Christian, though Norm eschews "religion," preferring to speak of "faith." Danny, his grandparents David and Margaret agree, did not always follow Jesus—he was for a time the sheep in the parable that leaves the fold, says Margaret. Rather than college, Danny spent for full-time work at Save-On after high school. He left his parents' home, and lived with Andi for a time. He gambled over poker, drank back's beer, smoked Export A's and played drums in Deliberately Offense or Third Rate, local punk and ska bands. He, says Andi, Danny remained "really close with God."

Last summer, after a year of living together, both she and Danny returned to their parents. Danny needed tobacco as a caregiver and received royalties. He and Andi saw less and less of each other and, when together, bickered. Soon they broke off. "He would occasionally go out of bounds—yet he knew where his shepherd was," says Margaret, his grandmothers. "He knew who was with him through the valley."

On Sunday, Jan. 5, Danny and Andrew travelled to Cypress Mountain, north of Vancouver, to volunteer. The pair returned on the last run just past 1 p.m., slipping through open learning access to the Tony Baker gallery, an off-limits area named for a skier who died there years ago.

"The snow was melting," says Andrew. "It was deep powder." Still, he says, "We knew we were out of bounds." The estimated 100-foot, really a spout of chaos—was leading the pair down a narrowing corridor that afforded no exit. Danny, says Andrew, "probably thought he was on the front of the hill, but where we were—every little bit of down hill that we were—was where the wrong way."

Danny, the stronger boarder, rode first. Andrew, meanwhile, leapt a voice behind him and turned to find his girlfriend ordering him out. Though he'd lost sight of his friend, he rode on, following Danny's tracks before ducking to a stop in a portapotty area. He glanced down and saw that Danny's tracks continued to the edge of a creek and then beyond, on down the slope. Andrew approached the missing skier. A Right-of-Way, he thought for a moment he would follow. "For some reason, something told me not to go down that way," says Andrew, who turned away and climbed, board in hand, from the gully. Danny, whom he had last seen before jumping at the mouth of the portapotty's cone, did not reappear below.

That night, a snow swept the mountain. Two days later, searchers found Danny Epp's body at the bottom of a 70-m cliff.

BY STEPHAN LEE

COLOUR SENSE



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